



**for immediate release**  
September 04, 2006

## **CUMULUS PRESS AUTHOR TO DEFY CONCORDIA 9/11 SECURITY BAN**

### **Bernans Boycotts Risk Assessment Committee for Public Reading of Novel, *North of 9/11***

Controversial Canadian author, David Bernans, has accepted an invitation to read from his novel, *North of 9/11* (Cumulus Press, 2006), at the Concordia Community Solidarity Co-op Bookstore despite the University Risk Assessment Committee's refusal of his original room-booking request.

Bernans says that he refuses to submit a second request for the September 11, 2006 event "because the first one was filled out properly and I'm boycotting Concordia's Risk Assessment Committee." He questions the committee's legitimacy because "it doesn't give reasons for its decisions, its membership is secret and it really appears to be accountable to nobody except itself."

Bernans is challenging the University to meet the following conditions before his boycott is lifted:

1. All Risk Assessment Committee past and present membership must be made public.
2. There must be a public review of the Risk Assessment Committee's policies, procedures and past decisions.
3. The committee must offer reasons for the decision made immediately following each negative risk assessment (none have been given so far in Bernans' case).
4. Undergraduate and graduate students, full and part-time faculty and university staff should all have representation on the committee appointed by their respective representative associations.

Cumulus Press supports the author's decision to follow through with the public reading of his novel. Publisher, David Widginton, agrees that the Risk Assessment Committee's policies, procedures and past decisions should be reviewed. "The way the Committee dealt with our author's request," Widginton says, "with the decision reversal and without providing a reason, proves its arbitrary nature and unveils its capacity to censor events its members don't like. I challenge the University PR department's denial of the Committee's role in the decision."

Cumulus Press acknowledges the support of organisations like PEN Canada, which is dedicated to freedom of expression, and The Public Service Alliance of Canada for writing letters to Michael di Grappa, head of the Risk Assessment Committee, questioning the committee's decision in Bernans' case, as well as its role and decision-making process.

Bernans, a Concordia student, is calling for a general boycott. "Until these reasonable demands are met," he says, "I encourage Concordia community members to refuse to fill out the booking forms." Bernans filed an access to information request on July 26 regarding Concordia's actions in his dossier, but the University has failed to respond within the required 20-day deadline.

Bernans' satirical "Confession of a 9/11 terrorist" is proliferating through the blogosphere, confirming a fatigue of 'war on terror' hyperbole.

An excerpt from **North of 9/11** (chapter 2: September 11, 2001) is available online at [http://www.cumuluspress.com/pdf.files/9-11\\_chap2.pdf](http://www.cumuluspress.com/pdf.files/9-11_chap2.pdf).

**#30#**

Contact info: David Widginton, publisher  
<http://www.cumuluspress.com> — 514.523.1975